

U.S. Department of Education
2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [X] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Ms. Michelle Allen

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Icahn Charter School 4

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1500 Pelham Parkway South

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Bronx State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 10461-1100

County Bronx

Telephone (718) 828-0034 Fax (718) 828-0064

Web site/URL http://www.ica hncharterschool4.org E-mail mallen@ccics.org

Twitter Handle _____ Facebook Page _____ Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Jeffrey Litt E-mail jlitt@ccics.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Jeffrey Litt Tel. (718) 828-0034

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Ms. Gail Golden
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 938 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 305 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 438 High schools
 - 72 K-12 schools
- 1753 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- ☒ Urban or large central city
 - ☐ Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - ☐ Suburban
 - ☐ Small city or town in a rural area
 - ☐ Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

| Grade | # of Males | # of Females | Grade Total |
|----------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| PreK | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| K | 14 | 26 | 40 |
| 1 | 18 | 22 | 40 |
| 2 | 16 | 22 | 38 |
| 3 | 15 | 19 | 34 |
| 4 | 19 | 21 | 40 |
| 5 | 20 | 13 | 33 |
| 6 | 14 | 20 | 34 |
| 7 | 10 | 17 | 27 |
| 8 | 14 | 18 | 32 |
| 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12 or higher | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Students | 140 | 178 | 318 |

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 62 % Black or African American
 - 33 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 1 % White
 - 1 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 5%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

| Steps For Determining Mobility Rate | Answer |
|--|--------|
| (1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year | 4 |
| (2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year | 10 |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)] | 14 |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014 | 286 |
| (5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4) | 0.049 |
| (6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100 | 5 |

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 7 %
22 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Twi, Fulani, Sonike, Mandingo, French, Arabic, Wolof, Russian, Spanish, Igbo & Albanian

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 71 %
Total number students who qualify: 225

8. Students receiving special education services: 7 %
22 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>0</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>10</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>12</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Mental Retardation | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

| | Number of Staff |
|---|-----------------|
| Administrators | 2 |
| Classroom teachers | 19 |
| Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc. | 7 |
| Paraprofessionals | 3 |
| Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc. | 1 |

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 18:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

| Required Information | 2014-2015 | 2013-2014 | 2012-2013 | 2011-2012 | 2010-2011 |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Daily student attendance | 95% | 94% | 96% | 94% | 96% |
| High school graduation rate | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**
Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2015.

| Post-Secondary Status | |
|---|----|
| Graduating class size | 0 |
| Enrolled in a 4-year college or university | 0% |
| Enrolled in a community college | 0% |
| Enrolled in career/technical training program | 0% |
| Found employment | 0% |
| Joined the military or other public service | 0% |
| Other | 0% |

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

The Icahn Charter Schools, using the Core Knowledge Curriculum developed by E.D. Hirsch, will provide students in grades K-8 with a rigorous academic program offered in an extended day/year setting. Students will complete the 8th grade armed with the skills and knowledge to participate successfully in the most rigorous academic environments, and will have a sense of personal and community responsibility.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

Following the NY State Charter school guidelines, students are enrolled in Icahn Charter School 4 via lottery. Interested families submit applications from December 1st through April 1st. The school lottery takes place in April and a waiting list is then generated from the remaining applicants.

PART III – SUMMARY

Icahn Charter School 4 is a replica of the successful flagship school that began in the South Bronx in September 2001. Icahn Charter School 4 first opened its doors as a Kindergarten through Second grade school in Community School District 12 on September 9, 2010. Three years later, the school relocated to its permanent home on Pelham Parkway South in District 11 in the Bronx. The school currently has a population of 318 students in Kindergarten through 8th grade, with a demographic consisting of 62% African-American, 33% Hispanic, 1% White and 4% other. Icahn Charter School 4 currently has an 81% proficiency rate in Math and 51% in ELA.

Icahn Charter School 4 has an educational program consisting of a longer school day and a longer school year with two classes per grade with an 18:1 student-to-teacher ratio. The school community is close-knit, and the school leader is widely recognized for her open door policy to parents, staff, and students. Through the use of technology, which the school has become known for, there are various opportunities for individualized and differentiated learning, which is crucial for children at risk of academic failure. Teachers receive instructional assistance for struggling learners from targeted assistance teachers who work with them in a push in/pull out model to specifically scaffold the skills that students are having difficulty with. In addition to the Targeted Assistance program, our school also provides ESL and related services (speech, counseling, SETSS, and vision) for students with IEP's; these services help all of our learners develop their full potential. Additional academic supports that contribute to our students' academic success are bi-weekly after-school tutoring and a rigorous Saturday Academy program. Prior to the opening of each school year, teachers receive quality professional development around school wide initiatives to become well versed in the best instructional practices and be better equipped at reaching all of their learners. Throughout the school year, teachers also have several opportunities to perfect their craft during full and half-day professional development sessions, school and network inter-visitations, common planning sessions, and consultation days.

Icahn Charter School 4 uses its traditions to weave students, staff, and families into a cohesive and supportive community. For the past five years, Icahn Charter School 4 has held an annual ELA and Math carnival. A week before the NYS exams, teachers in grades 3-8 review data from ELA and Math simulation tests and create educational games tailored to the CCSS standards that the students have struggled with the most. Students are then awarded tickets for completing assignments and showing how they arrived at their answers; they are later able to redeem prizes. For the past 3 years, our school has also celebrated School Choice Week. During this week, major school initiatives for the school year that have significantly impacted student learning and achievement are highlighted for families and the community. It is a great opportunity to showcase the wonderful work that the teachers are doing everyday and allows parents and the community to better understand the work that goes into making the school an academic success. Icahn Charter School 4 also celebrates our students' strides in independent reading with 100 Book Challenge ceremonies. During the 100 Book Challenge ceremonies, students receive medals and certificates that highlight their achievement towards their reading goals.

In addition to the traditions that cohere the community, Icahn Charter School 4 employs a variety of strategies and programs to encourage and challenge students to develop their full potential academically, emotionally, physically, socially, and culturally. For example, Students of The Month are celebrated on the basis of their academic accomplishments, core values, or significant improvement in major content areas--as well as their outstanding citizenship and perfect attendance. In order to support our students' social and emotional development, we work with Move This World to help our students understand, engage, express, and manage their emotions in a healthy way. We encourage students to participate in daily rituals that promote self-expression, team building, and acceptance: these subsequently help them to tap into their full academic and creative potential. We also offer acting, dancing, and art residencies during the school day to support students with their socio-emotional development. These residencies allow students to tap into their creativity while learning age-appropriate social skills. After school, students have opportunities to further explore various interests and talents through robotics, instrumental and vocal music, cooking, drama, and basketball. Middle school students have the additional opportunity to participate in Xposure, which teaches students about financial literacy while exposing them to professions in animation, music production, and

filmmaking. Through daily recess and weekly gym classes--including fitness initiatives such as The President's Fitness Challenge, NYRR Mighty Milers, and IronWill Kids--students learn the importance of staying healthy and taking care of themselves physically as well as mentally. Celebrating diversity has been one of the most important strategies that we have utilized to encourage and challenge students to work to their full potential. Students' cultures and beliefs are supported and honored, with the understanding that differences are not to be merely tolerated, but instead fully accepted and celebrated. In all of our programs and initiatives at Icahn Charter School 4, we seek to realize the belief that in order for students to learn and grow, they first need to feel safe and accepted.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Icahn Charter School 4 is modeled after Icahn Charter School 1, and follows the same curriculum: Core Knowledge, which was developed by E.D. Hirsh. The concepts taught in the Core Knowledge curriculum are supported through a series of grade-specific teacher handbooks, text resources, blackline masters, and books entitled “What Every Child Needs to Know”. Accompanied by these resources, the Core Knowledge curriculum provides direct instruction for educators to deliver rigorous instruction. The curriculum is clear enough in its design to also afford parents / guardians, the opportunity to follow along with the sequence, and provide additional assistance to their child. The Core Knowledge curriculum is divided into monthly syllabi that outline the topics to be taught. These syllabi are distributed to parents and students--giving both the student and their parents clear expectations and ownership of learning. Using the Core Knowledge curriculum, teachers create unit plans that are shared with parents / guardians. The unit plans detail the number of assessments that will be administered during the marking period in order to accurately gauge the students’ knowledge of the content. The unit plans also include common core standards, learning targets, important vocabulary (supported by illustrations for ELLs and visual learners) and a rubric that details understanding at each level toward mastery. The topics of these monthly syllabi, as well as the Core Knowledge domains and “Big Ideas,” are the basis of the bi-monthly narrative progress reports that serve as the formal communication of a student’s progress during each marking period.

At Icahn Charter School 4, data from weekly assessments in ELA, math, science, and social studies are used to drive and differentiate instruction. Teachers meet regularly with the school’s leadership team to use accurate and timely data to successfully plan differentiated instruction. Teachers use item analysis to determine which standards students struggled with, which standards students excelled in, and to target the needs of specific groups of students. This analysis guides not only the classroom teacher’s instruction but also the instruction of the Targeted Assistance teachers, who are responsible for remediating skills in ELA and Math. Instruction provides teachers with an opportunity to focus on the skills students need to be successful in all of the major content areas, as well as the opportunity to engage students in the core issues of their world. Assessments--both formative and summative--afford teachers an opportunity to reflect on their own practices and improve their teaching strategies to continue fostering higher-order thinking skills in students at all ability levels.

In order to maximize the potential of all of our learners, the Core Knowledge program is used in conjunction with the Wonders program, which utilizes both fiction and nonfiction texts for whole class ELA instruction. This program is systematic and has sequential phonics instruction in grades Kindergarten through fourth grade, which provides foundational skills, along with leveled readers to facilitate differentiated instruction. Each classroom has its own trade book library for students to borrow from, along with a leveled library used for students to record independent reading steps. As students progress, teachers use running records and reading conferences to ensure that each student is being appropriately challenged by their reading material. In addition, all classrooms have separate guided reading libraries that teachers use for small group instruction within the classroom to engage students in close and careful reading.

At Icahn Charter School 4, the EnVisions mathematics program is used in conjunction with Core Knowledge. This program provides students with an understanding of the importance of math in a real world context. Through each teacher’s creativity, coupled with their understanding of the core domains students must master in each grade, students at Icahn 4 are continuously tasked with creating projects and completing assignments that mirror mathematical understanding and innovation in real world scenarios. Manipulatives are consistently utilized during whole and small group instruction to ensure that students are being afforded multiple learning opportunities to fully grasp abstract concepts. In addition, Targeted Assistance teachers work with struggling students in small group push-in/pull-out settings, while math coaches on a weekly basis, ensure that teachers utilize best practices to reach all learners.

At Icahn Charter School 4, science is taught through hands-on exploration. Teachers share their passion for science through engaging experiments with everyday objects to better relate the experiments--and students' learning--to real world situations. Science teachers marry their love of the content with the discipline of scientific inquiry and the logic of the scientific method. In middle school, students also use Z-Space to interact with virtual simulations of experiments that would not traditionally be feasible in the classroom--erosion over the course of centuries, or animal dissections, for example. After students have explored new concepts through experimentation, they are tasked with discussing the importance of the experiment and their findings as they relate to real issues in our world. Science teachers have engaged students' on the issues of global warming, sustainable energy, continued space exploration, and ecological stability. The process of exploring these concepts in science has lead our students to more fully realize their natural curiosity and become more inquisitive and invested citizens in our world. In addition, weekly science literacy and research lessons for eighth graders require students to engage in cross-curricular thinking--finding and utilizing evidence to support their theories and hypotheses--to strengthen their writing skills and comprehension of informational texts.

In the Core Knowledge curriculum, social studies is spiraled throughout the grades. Social studies is the subject in which all of the content areas are supported. Teachers use units about Ancient Civilizations, Medieval Europe or the World Religions to teach writing and reading comprehension, and to make connections to science and math when applicable. Engaging projects allow students to transform their conceptual understanding of social studies content knowledge into concrete products. In the middle grades, for example, students apply their understanding of the feudal system and Medieval European architecture to design and build their own cardboard castles. Although the content may be rigorous, the curriculum introduces sophisticated topics in an age-appropriate way, spiraling back to the content in the upper grades with specific details better suited to a more mature frame of reference.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

In addition to the core curriculum, Icahn Charter School 4 also offers visual and performing arts, physical education, nutrition, foreign language, technology, and socioemotional development. Early instruction in the arts provides our students with various opportunities to listen to music, sing, dance, act, draw, paint, read and write poetry, and produce other artistic works. At Icahn Charter School 4, students engage in various residencies such as Theatre for a New Audience (TFNA), Dancing Classrooms, Ballroom Basix, and art residencies such as LeAp during the school day. These residencies allow students to tap into their creative potential while learning age-appropriate social skills. After school, students have opportunities to further explore various interests and talents through robotics, instrumental and vocal music, cooking, drama, and basketball. Middle school students have the additional opportunity to participate in Xposure, which teaches students about financial literacy while exposing them to artistic professions (animation, music production, and filmmaking). Through daily recess and weekly gym classes -- including fitness initiatives such as The President's Fitness Challenge, NYRR Mighty Milers, and IronWill Kids-- students learn the importance of staying healthy and taking care of themselves physically as well as mentally. In 2011, Icahn Charter School 4 was the recipient of the NYC Excellence in School Wellness Gold Award.

Foreign language instruction for middle school students at Icahn Charter School 4 has been adapted to fit the philosophy of fostering a life long learning of the Spanish language. Students are actively engaged in their learning because lessons are based on real-life dialogue and discussion. In this way, content is made more coherent, and students can become fluent Spanish speakers. Seventh grade classes have been introduced to the Spanish language through the Glencoe curriculum, *Asi se dice*. The basic greetings, farewells, colors, numbers, days of the week, months of the year and seasons have been taught to the students. To describe the physical characteristics, relationships and professions students have also learned about the verb *ser* (to be) and *tener* (to have). Cultural connection are made when students understand what schools are like in Spanish-speaking countries and how our students lives are similar and different to those of students in other parts of the world. This connection motivates all and allows learning to flow seamlessly in the classroom. When the curriculum of the class is designed around the way students talk and think, understanding becomes a natural phenomenon, which propels the love for learning. Through a variety of listening, writing, and speaking activities the 8th grade classes were reintroduced to the verbs *ser* and *estar*. Using these words, students created presentations on historical Hispanic figures. From Carlos Santana to Queen Isabella of Castille,

students explored differences from past to present and learned the importance of this language, as well as the contributions of its speakers. Technology has also been utilized to help students gain a better understanding of the Spanish language. Students are given assignments online using Middlebury Interactive Language courses. Middlebury Interactive Spanish language provides access to superior world language and English Language Learner curriculum solutions that prepare students with the skills and cultural understanding to compete in the 21st Century global marketplace. In addition, Middlebury Interactive Spanish language course provides students with the opportunity to immerse themselves in the Spanish language and its culture through an interactive online environment. This online environment allows for flexible implementation that is used in our blended learning classrooms.

Icahn Charter School 4 utilizes technology to better prepare students for an increasingly digital world. As a school, we implement various technologies as a means for data collection and analysis for teachers and administrators, as well as direct instructional tools to more effectively differentiate classroom instruction for students. We use i-Ready as both an online assessment and instructional program. i-Ready is an adaptive diagnostic assessment, which helps students to master specific skills within the domains of reading and math. This program is used by every student in the school and allows teachers to not only track, but also directly scaffold, student growth from throughout the school year. Teachers use technology to support the development of all learners through a blended learning environment. Small groups of students work together as they develop their mastery of different common core standards using online educational tools and assignments as well as small group instruction facilitated by teachers and/or expert students.

Move this World is a socioemotional curriculum provided to all students through online videos and workshops with expert instructors. Move this World fosters students' social and emotional growth by teaching them specific strategies for developing mindfulness and managing their emotions. Students begin each day by watching and practicing along with a short Move This World video, which allows them to move around, breathe, take note of, and release any emotional stressors they may have carried into the classroom with them. This allows students to greet each school day with an unburdened and open mind; better equipping them to learn.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

There are several instructional methods and interventions that Icahn Charter School 4 uses to meet the diverse needs of students in order to achieve its' instructional goals. Two instructional methods that have yielded the most results are flipped instruction and blended learning. Blended learning and flipped instruction provide a customized and differentiated approach to meet students' needs. Blended learning and flipped instruction allow teachers to use technology to empower students to take ownership of their learning, while affording teachers the opportunity to track mastery in real time and assign lessons and supports to help each student meet their individual goals. One of the most powerful examples of how these methods can be used to promote student achievement comes from a 6th grade teacher team who uses flipped instruction to teach *Grace Abounding* (the Core Knowledge African American anthology). The team used Google Classroom as the primary vehicle for flipped instruction. Assignments were created in Google Classroom, notifying students of the short stories they were responsible for reading prior to class. Additional support-guided questions and teacher recorded audio versions of the stories were also provided for the students. This allowed the students to independently familiarize themselves with the text before class discussions. This flipped approach allowed time for more engaged authentic discussion and segued into a deeper understanding of the text. These methods are used on a daily basis throughout our school in order to reach all learners.

The Learner-Active Technology-Infused (LATI) classroom is an initiative that has been implemented in Icahn Charter School 4 which allows for student-centered learning. A cohort of teachers have adopted the LATI philosophy and have transformed their classrooms to mirror this pedagogical shift in which students take true ownership of their learning. LATI provides teachers with a structured way to use technology and incorporate project based learning into daily instruction. The idea behind LATI is to raise academic rigor by actively engaging students and providing them with the opportunity to relate what they are learning to real-world scenarios.

Icahn Charter School 4 employs Targeted Assistance teachers who provide small group instruction and daily remediation for struggling students. Students are grouped according to their areas of weakness as identified on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), New York State assessments, and teacher recommendations. Approximately 87 children are provided with small group instruction in mathematics and 111 students in ELA. The Targeted Assistance teachers meet with their students 45 minutes a day; five days per week. They provide remedial instruction for students by either pushing into the classroom or pulling a small group in a separate location. Instruction is tailored to the standards that the students have not yet mastered, and the Targeted Assistance teachers track each students' progress towards mastery of the identified CCSS standards in daily reporting. On a weekly basis, the Targeted Assistance teachers collaborate with the classroom teachers on the best strategies and methods to use. In order to help motivate the students they discuss student weaknesses and devise action plans to help students; they also celebrate student achievement and individual growth they have witnessed. The constant communication with classroom teachers also helps the Targeted Assistant teachers fashion their lessons after the classroom teachers'; transitioning from the classroom to Targeted Assistance is seamless. Intervention services are also provided through before and after school tutoring, as well as during Saturday Academy, to help prepare students for the NYS exams.

4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

Icahn Charter School 4 uses a variety of assessment data to analyze and improve student and school performance. Assessment is a fundamental part of instruction, as it determines whether or not the goals of education are being met. Assessments inspires us to ask the question: "How is this being taught and is it working"? Assessments are used to systematically improve instruction and student learning by using the data from NYS ELA and Math assessments as well as the ITBS (Iowa test of Basic Skills) to drive instruction and plan for remediation. Classroom and Targeted Assistant teachers are tasked with the responsibility of creating data action plans, based on their review of the data from the previous year's results. Teachers analyze trends of strengths and weaknesses from the previous year. Students as well the data for incoming students to generate action plans. This allows teachers to create a cohesive instructional plan to address both the current grade levels standards and find opportunities in their instruction throughout the year to remediate those standards from the previous year in which students have shown deficiency. Once data action plans have been created by the classroom teacher with input from the Targeted Assistant teachers, assessments and clear focused goals for instruction can be created throughout all content areas. Once these goals for instruction have been identified, the school's leadership team then meets with the teacher teams periodically, to check-in and ensure that those goals are being met.

Throughout the school year, teachers use formative and summative assessments to track student growth and make plans for remediation. Teachers administer paper-based ELA assessments where students demonstrate strategies and math assessments where students are required to show their work. Formal and informal assessments are given consistently throughout the day using All in Learning. All In Learning uses clickers to record student responses' and afford teachers the opportunity to gauge in real time whether or not students understood the question, if the teacher should perhaps rephrase the question, or if the concept needs to be retaught. Traditional exit slips still play a vital role in generating / communicating feedback from students on how well they have mastered a particular topic. Online science programs such as Adaptive Curriculum and virtual labs through zSpace, allow students to perform real life simulations. This type of advanced technology takes science assessments to a new and exciting level but also provides another layer of data collection and analysis. Teachers can now pinpoint where students went wrong during their labs and provide assistance as needed. Academic achievement is reported frequently to the parents and the community. Progress reports are distributed at the end of each marking period with six progress reports per year, and parent teacher conferences held twice a year. Teachers stay in constant communication with parents via phone calls and emails to assure their child's success at Icahn Charter School 4. During parent teacher conferences, individualized student plans are reviewed based on their communication throughout the year, and are amended as needed to guide parents in helping their children become as successful as possible. In order to maintain high levels of achievement, Icahn Charter School 4 keeps a close eye on trends in data, and holds all teachers accountable to finding fun and engaging ways to ensure that students continue to master standards by spiraling challenging content into instruction at their current grade level. Students are constantly encouraged to meet these challenges with an immeasurable amount of support from the school community.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Icahn Charter School 4 cultivates a climate of collaborative excellence among both students and staff. Icahn Charter School 4 engages students in a rigorous academic curriculum with advanced technology components that support their continued interest in learning. In addition, students participate in a variety of activities to support their personal and social development. Classroom presentations and assemblies are conducted on an ongoing basis to provide opportunities for growth and learning. At the beginning of the school year, all students participate in an anti-bullying assembly to foster team building and collaboration. Students are also exposed to a variety of presentations with academic, personal, social and/or career development focus. Students are also exposed to a variety of cultural experiences through class trips. Overall, students learn, explore, and enjoy a variety of activities to enrich their learning, gain an appreciation for others, and develop their sense of responsibility as members of the school community. Icahn Charter School 4 promotes an inclusive environment for a unique population of students who come from diverse cultural backgrounds and religious denominations.

Icahn Charter School 4 provides a positive environment that supports students' academic, social, and emotional growth. The school provides a supportive academic environment of rigorous material and advanced technology to engage students throughout the learning process. Students on grade level are provided with opportunities to be nominated for academic enrichment programs that support them with test preparation for specialized and private schools. These specialized programs provide students with academic support throughout high school and in some cases, college. In addition to academic supports, students participate in a variety of additional activities to support their personal and social development. Presentations and assemblies are conducted throughout the year to provide support to each child's lifelong socioemotional growth. At the beginning of the school year, all students participate in an anti-bullying assembly to strengthen the sense of community and compassion within the school. Following that, students are exposed to presentations with various personal and social topics. The older grades also engage in activities and presentations centered on professional and career development. A variety of trips to various cultural organizations are also embedded as part of the school's curriculum. Students that have specific social and emotional concerns are provided with at-risk counseling and positive reinforcement. At Icahn Charter School 4, students learn in a multicultural and welcoming environment that strategically supports their curiosity, compassion, and sense of community—all of which allows students to feel safe to engage completely in their lessons and connect their traditional academic learning to authentic understanding.

The school culture at Icahn Charter School 4 is one in which teachers feel valued and supported through the exemplary leadership of our principal. Through the years, our has deliberately constructed a team of diverse educators who foster authentic relationships and demonstrate acceptance—a living model for our students of what it means to be accepting of differences. They work tirelessly to cultivate the skills of their team through consultation, collaboration, and professional development. Their leadership encourages the team to collaborate on a variety of activities, including: developing and aligning curriculum, instructional practices, assessment design, problem-solving, and peer observations. The principal actively fosters teamwork, paying special attention to how instructional time is allocated. They maximize planning time to allow teachers to co-plan in order to increase efficacy. The principal has a positive and enthusiastic can-do personality, an open-door policy, and makes themselves available to teachers, staff members, parents, and students. As the principal, they ensure that teachers feel appreciated; providing treats at staff meetings, tokens of appreciation throughout the year, and orchestrating spirit-building activities during various holidays. The principal also offers emotional support and encouragement when staff members are dealing with the unexpected challenges of life. They push the staff to be the best that they can be by encouraging them to further their own educational journeys. The principal is selfless and puts the needs of the staff and students above their own. They have fostered and developed a family at Icahn 4 where we are “all for one and one for all.” The retention rate of the staff at Icahn 4 over the years is a direct result of the principal's ability to create and maintain an atmosphere where the staff feels valued, appreciated, and supported in their efforts, which subsequently leads to the academic excellence of the students at Icahn Charter School 4.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Icahn Charter School 4 utilizes several strategies that have proven successful in working with families and the community and have resulted in student success and school improvement. Icahn Charter School 4 prides itself on its relationship with its families and the surrounding community. Support programs and enrichment activities invite parents to become involved with the school in a positive way. One such enrichment activity is our Parent Book Club; parents gather on Saturday mornings to share coffee, breakfast, and read books pertaining to personal and social topics. The Parent Book Club fosters an inclusive environment for all participants by nurturing diverse opinions so that parents feel comfortable sharing. The Parent Book Club has since developed into an outlet for parents/guardians to share stories about their own upbringings, successes, and challenges, as well as their hopes and dreams for the future. Other elements of Icahn Charter School 4's family and community engagement include parent/guardian workshops, school-wide or class performances, and showcases of student work. Participation in these events is typically over 90%. Some of the themes covered during parent workshops have included: international arts and crafts, character development, bullying, cyber-safety, the transition to high school, specialized programs, nutrition, and fitness—to name a few. Parent fitness classes with Fit for Life NYC encourage parents to cultivate healthy lifestyles for themselves and their families. During the most recent bullying workshop, a guest speaker from the local police precinct presented important information on bullying to enlighten parents on what constitutes bullying behavior, how it affects others, the many different forms of bullying, and methods to prevent and stop bullying. Parents acquired strategies to better initiate conversations at home with their children. Subsequently, parents requested that the presenters conduct an assembly for their children on this topic as well.

Icahn Charter School 4 collaborates with nonprofit groups in the community, such as the Learning through Expanded Arts Program (LeAp), Xposure, and Move This World. Through LeAp, students in grades K-2 have participated in the Active Learning Leads to Literacy (ALLL) program, which empowers teachers to infuse the arts into their instruction. LeAp also assists in the execution of special art projects, such as painting on canvas. After school, students in grades 3-5 work with the LeAp-hosted young entrepreneurs program. Xposure is a STEM-based program that allows our middle school students to participate in enrichment activities in art, film, music, and technology, while also learning about financial literacy. Move This World has proven essential in addressing socio-emotional concerns. Icahn Charter School 4's partnerships with these community programs enrich students' lives by exposing them to new skills, disciplines, and ideas.

3. Professional Development:

Icahn Charter School 4 tailors professional development to best meet the needs of its teachers. As a result of being in operation for seven years, it has become essential to differentiate professional development for adult learners. Being that all great teachers are lifelong learners, The Dreyfus Model of Skill Acquisition is often referenced by the school's leadership team to help guide teachers along the continuum towards mastery. Professional Development is then decided based on the level of mastery teachers have displayed in certain areas. This has helped to determine which teachers are flourishing through traditional professional development and which teachers would benefit from individualized coaching. Teachers who excel are sent out to workshops and encouraged to turn key information to their colleagues. Teachers in the Expert to Master range of skill acquisition are invited to be a part of a cohort and are expected to adopt the new practice or model of instruction, so that their classrooms can serve as a training site for their colleagues. The Learner-Active Technology-Infused classroom is an initiative that has been implemented in Icahn Charter School 4 which allows for student centered learning. One such cohort has begun adopting the philosophy of LATI and has transformed their classrooms to mirror this pedagogical shift in which students take true ownership for their learning. The idea behind LATI is to raise academic rigor by using technology to help students solve authentic problems. There are numerous opportunities for professional development, which is delivered in a myriad of ways.

Teachers can receive training anywhere from a lunch and learn with the leadership team regarding school-wide initiatives to a webinar with the developer of a new online program like eduCanon (PlayPosit). During our district wide professional development sessions, top presenters with impressive backgrounds in education are invited to showcase new and innovative instructional practices. From these sessions, it is then up to each participant to take what they've learned and find ways to use it in the classroom. The district also provides professional development to the school's leadership team. The district has tasked the leadership team with the responsibility of turnkeying mandated initiatives in order to streamline instruction across the schools. In order to align pedagogy with academic standards in ELA and support student achievement, the district has made it a priority for all teachers to focus on close reading. Teachers across the network received targeted professional development on ways to successfully execute this strategy. This strategy has proven successful not only in streamlining instruction across the network but by increasing rigor in ELA instruction. Another form of professional development that builds capacity amongst teachers in the district are inter-visitations. During an inter-visitation, arrangements are made to see a teacher in another school who specializes in the same content area. Teachers go to the school and observe best practices to bring to their classroom to improve instruction. During the final full day of professional development for the school year, teachers are invited to submit proposals about a best practice that they would like to share with the district. Each teacher is encouraged to create a presentation for an area in which they feel passionate about. Many teachers feel that this is the most successful day of professional development of the school year. As a result of the school and district professional development, overall improvement is achieved by focusing on academic standards.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy at Icahn 4 follows the ethos, “We are crew”—there are no idle passengers in the creation of lifelong learners. Everyone at Icahn Charter School 4 is required to perform at the level of excellence set by the expectations of the principal and the superintendent. The school principal trained at the flagship school (Icahn Charter School 1), and works everyday to continue the tradition of excellence that was set by the founding principal and current superintendent of the Icahn Schools. The school structure fosters a collegial environment where all parties are comfortable in taking risks to encourage student achievement.

The principal, staff developer, and school counselor work collaboratively to ensure that policies, programs, relationships, and resources are focused on student achievement. The principal sets the tone for the organization, and although they wear many hats, their most important role is that of instructional leader. The principal drives the instructional program with initiatives based on assessment data, ensuring that appropriate services are provided to meet the differentiated needs of the students. The role of the staff developer is to support the initiatives of the principal by analyzing assessment data, modeling lessons, and being a resource for teachers in the areas of best practices and classroom management. The school counselor supports student achievement by providing grade-wide advisory meetings for middle schoolers, high school application support, advisement to students during crises, and serving as the school's IEP coordinator to ensure that the school is in compliance with supporting the needs of all learners.

The leadership team ensures that all stakeholders are aware of the proper protocols and procedures of the school by reviewing the staff handbook at the beginning of each school year. The school counselor and the principal also hold a staff meeting at the beginning of each year explaining the process of referring a child for an evaluation with the CSE and discuss the teachers' roles as mandated reporters. The principal and the school counselor also meet with the teachers to review student IEP's, ensuring that teachers begin to think about how they are going to differentiate their instruction based on the students' classifications, academic goals, and management needs.

All of Icahn Charter School 4's artistic residencies relate to at least one common core standard and track students' growth. Students in acting residencies write scripts, which support their development as writers. The Xposure program tasks students with the responsibility of researching information to be used in film, music, art, or coding. The research skills used in Xposure directly apply to students' work in the classroom. The relationships among teachers and students is very collegial and fosters academic achievement. At Icahn Charter School 4, the principal fosters this environment by allowing teachers time to formally visit each

other's classrooms on Colleague Observation Days to share best practices and ways to improve teaching and learning in their classroom. This is done in a very supportive way, with visiting teachers taking videos, pictures, and samples of their colleagues' work that highlights a best practice they would like to emulate in their own classroom. There is a plethora of resources at Icahn Charter School 4 to aid in student achievement and all teachers know that if there is something that will help their students; it's theirs.

One resource that has truly impacted student achievement is technology. Having the right hardware—and plenty of it—allows the school to effectively execute flipped instruction and blended learning. Icahn Charter School 4 is equipped with a SMART Board in every room, student and teacher desktops, laptops, iPads, Kindle Fires and iPod Nanos. The early childhood classrooms are also equipped with i-Start Smart computers and SMART Tables. All of these devices provide opportunities for teachers to truly differentiate their instruction by assigning lessons to meet the needs of their learners, allowing them to blend their classroom in a multitude of ways to better reach every learner.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The academic success at Icahn Charter School 4 can be attributed to many things—from the rigorous academic curriculum offered, to the various assessments and data tools used to measure and drive instruction—but the one practice at Icahn Charter School 4 that makes our school so successful has to be the socioemotional approach that is ingrained in our school culture. At Icahn Charter School 4, we view our students as individuals, where each child has their own unique needs. We believe that it takes an entire village to raise our children and, as such, we strive to meet the social, emotional, physical, and educational needs of all of our students. We partner with parents in order to help them help their children so that they can reach their full potential. Children cannot learn if they are dealing with social and emotional issues just as parents cannot help their children if they are struggling socially and emotionally to meet their basic needs. We believe that by offering our support to our students and their families we are investing in the whole child, not just one aspect of the child's life. As such, this philosophy is shared the entire school community: from administration and teachers, to the support staff. Everyone is invested in making sure that our students live up to, and reach, their full potential. We believe in meeting our students at their point of need by responding to their needs practically and compassionately, while providing them with access to resources that will allow them to grow in a nurturing environment. As a result of our beliefs, we meet our students' needs in a variety of ways, but the methods used are always chosen based upon the individual needs of each child. We tailor their educational supports to match the individual student by offering extra academic support—whether through small group instruction, one-on-one instruction, after-school and/or before school tutoring—we do what is necessary in order to help each child realize and believe that they are capable of learning and achieving academic success. We offer social and emotional support as needed. Everyone is invested in making sure that all of our students are nurtured in an encouraging atmosphere. At Icahn Charter School 4, we strive for excellence.